CREATE YOUR RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE

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MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES

RECORDS MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

Laws, Rules, and Regulations

The purpose of this site is to guide Maryland State, county, and local government agencies in the management of public records. The Annotated Code of Maryland State Government Article 10, sections 608-611 require every State, county or local government agency to develop a program to efficiently manage its records. This includes the establishment and/or regular revision of records retention and disposition schedules. The head of each agency or office is responsible for ensuring that all records created or received by that agency are on an approved records retention and disposition schedule.

The willful, unauthorized destruction or alienation of any public record is a misdemeanor subject to criminal penalties set forth in the Annotated Code of Maryland (Criminal Law Article 8, section 606). A public record may not be disposed of without authorization from the State Archivist. This authorization must be obtained by means of filing a records retention and disposition schedule with the State of Maryland. The Schedule Preparation section of this web site provides guidance on the development and approval of records retention schedules.

If you are a State agency with an approved records retention schedule and would like to transfer non-permanent records to the State Records Center, please contact the Records Management Division at 410-799-1379. Agencies must complete and submit a Records Transmittal and Receipt Form (DGS 550-5) prior to transfer.

If you already have an approved records retention schedule and would like to arrange for the transfer of permanent records to the Archives, please visit the Records Transfer section of this website.

All records management forms and instructions are available online.

County, municipal, and other local authorities may seek delegated authority from the State Archivist to develop and implement their own records retention schedules.
Retention Schedules

A retention schedule is a key document for your agency's records management program. It documents what records your agency creates and defines how long you need to retain them before you destroy them or transfer them to the State Archives.

Click on the guidance topic below to get more information [Expand All]

- What is a retention schedule and why do I need one?
- Finding approved schedules
- Creating a retention schedule
- Schedule requirements
- Suggested retention language
- Getting your schedule approved
- Keeping your schedule current

This web site is provided as a courtesy of the Maryland State Archives. As you develop your records management program, you should consult with the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services and your staff counsel.
STEP 1: DESIGNATE THE RECORDS OFFICER

- In larger agencies, the City Clerk is the Custodian of Records
- Smaller agencies should decide
- Register the Records Officer with the MSA
- MSA Website offers guidance for the Records Officer
STEP 2: DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF EACH SCHEDULE YOU PREPARE

Entire Agency -- OR -- Division/Department/Unit?

• Size of the agency
• Departmental structure
• Which is easier for you?
• This becomes the Division/Unit for your schedule
### Example - City of Gaithersburg By Departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>05/15/2014</td>
<td>City of Gaithersburg, Planning and Code Administration - Environmental Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>05/15/2014</td>
<td>City of Gaithersburg, Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>05/15/2014</td>
<td>City of Gaithersburg, Public Works - Facilities and Capital Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>05/16/2014</td>
<td>City of Gaithersburg, City Manager's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>05/30/2014</td>
<td>City of Gaithersburg, Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>05/30/2014</td>
<td>City of Gaithersburg, City Manager's Office - Legal Services - Municipal Elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>06/26/2015</td>
<td>City of Gaithersburg, Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>06/26/2015</td>
<td>City of Gaithersburg, Public Works - Engineering Services and Operations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 3: INVENTORY ALL RECORDS

Find ALL records:
• File drawers
• Dusty boxes/store rooms/under desks
• Electronic files, including email
STEP 4: IDENTIFY EACH “RECORD SERIES” = CATEGORY

• A “Record Series” is a category

• MSA definition: “a set of file units or documents maintained on paper, microform, magnetic disk, magnetic tape, or other medium (ELECTRONIC RECORDS) and related to a particular subject or function of an agency or office or is derived from a particular activity of an agency or office.”
EXAMPLES OF RECORD SERIES (CATEGORIES):

- Legislation
- Minutes
- Agreements
- Council Meetings
- Boards And Committees
- Travel Vouchers
- Property Files

No Matter What Form The Record Is In
STEP 5A: “APPRAISAL” = EVALUATE EACH RECORD SERIES

1. “Permanent” or “Non-Permanent”?

2. If Non-Permanent: how long should you keep the records in that Series (category)?

3. Consider the following criteria:
   - Historical Value
   - Administrative Value
   - Regulatory and Statutory Requirements
   - Legal Value
   - Fiscal
THEN 5B: ASSIGN RETENTION AND DISPOSITION TO EACH RECORD SERIES

• Assign retention periods to each record series based on your evaluation

• Retention is generally based on a specific amount of time passing and/or specified criteria being met

• Decide the “Disposition” -- what should happen to each Record Series after the retention period (when the series can be destroyed, scanned, moved to off-site storage, or, if permanent, transferred to State Archives)

• A record deemed “permanent” on your schedule should be offered to the Maryland State Archives
STEP 6: WRITE IT UP!

• Check the MSA website for instructions

• Use MSA forms DGS 550-14 and DGS 550-15 (Rev. 7/17)

• Review the records series, retention and disposition schedules with your chain of command before submitting
Sample Records Inventory and Retention Schedule Cover Sheet

Form DGS 550-14 (Revised 7/17)
**Sample Records Inventory and Retention Schedule**

**Form DGS 550-15 (Revised 7/17)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record Series Content</th>
<th>BUSINESS MEETINGS OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL. MAY INCLUDE: AGENDAS, APPROVED MINUTES, LETTERS, MEMORANDUMS, STUDIES, REPORTS, BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS AND OTHER MATERIAL RELATED TO THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record Series Function</td>
<td>EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF THESE RECORDS. WHY ARE THESE RECORDS CREATED? HOW ARE THEY USED BY YOUR AGENCY OR BY THE PUBLIC?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/Arrangement</td>
<td>CHRONOLOGICAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indexing System</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions (Law or Regulation Citation)</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formats (bound book, microfilm, pdf, ill, etc.)</td>
<td>3&quot; BINDERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume (file drawers, gigabytes, etc.)</td>
<td>12 FILE DRAWERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Accumulation (file drawers, gigabytes, etc.)</td>
<td>1/4 FILE DRAWER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Location</td>
<td>LOWER LEVEL FILE ROOM AND ADMINISTRATION FILE ROOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit Requirements</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Span</td>
<td>1945 – CURRENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completeness/Gaps</td>
<td>COMPLETE, NO GAPS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Item Number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>PERMANENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification for Permanent Retention</td>
<td>OFFICIAL RECORDS OF CITY BUSINESS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 7: GET YOUR SCHEDULE APPROVED
Submit electronic draft to MSA for preliminary review.
MSA Website provides options for:
➢ Googledoc forms - Share
➢ Word doc forms – Email

Once the preliminary review is complete, print three copies, have it signed by the agency head or appointed Records Officer, and mail to the Records Management Division, Department of General Services, 7275 Waterloo Road, PO Box 275, Jessup MD 20794.
STEP 8: DEVELOP INTERNAL PROCEDURES TO ENACT THE APPROVED GUIDELINES.

• Once your Schedule is approved by the state, it becomes the legal authorization for the disposal of records

• Develop internal procedures to regularly review your files in accordance with the approved Schedule

• Submit Disposal Certificates to the state electronically

• Maintain an inventory based on the Record Series and disposal certificates
TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES
1. SCANNING

- If you have scanning software, incorporate the scanning of records into your Schedule
- MSA has scanning standards - all images must be a complete and accurate reproduction of the original (see MSA website for details.)
- Retention and disposition of electronic records and paper records may vary – clarify each
1. Scanning Resolution: at least 300 dpi (paper equivalent resolution)

2. Output Format:
   - Bi-Tonal CCITT Group IV, TIFF formatted images
   - If CCITT Group IV, TIFF formatted images do not result in a completely legible image (which may be the case, especially if the original has poor legibility or includes signatures or seals), we recommend 8 bit/256 shade gray-scale jpegs with the file extension "jpg".
   - If color is necessary to the understanding of the record, imaging must be done in color

3. Compression: no less than 85% to avoid significant image degradation

4. Polarity: 100% positive polarity (i.e., black writing on white background). This is especially important to note in the case of imaging negative photostats with marginal notes
2. DEPARTMENT OF RECORD:

• WHEN A RECORD SERIES OVERLAPS DEPARTMENTS WITHIN YOUR AGENCY, COORDINATE WITH THE OTHER DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE WHO WILL INCLUDE THE SERIES ON THEIR SCHEDULE
  ➢ THIS BECOMES THE DEPARTMENT OF RECORD FOR THAT SERIES
  ➢ THE OTHER DEPARTMENT DOES NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE THE SERIES ON THEIR SCHEDULE

3. OUTSIDE AGENCY MATERIAL:

  ➢ DO NOT INCLUDE OUTSIDE REFERENCE MATERIAL OR OUTSIDE AGENCY DOCUMENTS ON YOUR SCHEDULE
4. SUPERSEDING OR AMENDING YOUR SCHEDULE:

➢ REVIEW YOUR SCHEDULE EVERY TWO YEARS
   ➢ TO MAKE MINOR REVISIONS – DO AN AMENDMENT
   ➢ FOR MAJOR REVISIONS – SUPERSEDE THE PREVIOUS SCHEDULE

5. ONLINE DISPOSAL CERTIFICATES:

➢ CREATE A USER NAME AND PASSWORD ON THE MSA WEBSITE TO ACCESS ONLINE DISPOSAL CERTIFICATES

➢ FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS FOR SIMPLE ONLINE SUBMISSION OF DISPOSAL CERTIFICATES
QUESTIONS?

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Maryland State Archives